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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7784th meeting
Thursday, 6 October 2016, 3.35 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Iliichev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Letter dated 27 September 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/813)

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2016/819)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda is adopted.

The situation in Mali

Letter dated 27 September 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/813)

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2016/819)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item of the agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/813, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 September 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, as well as to document S/2016/819, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for your invitation to brief the Security Council along with my colleague and friend Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare, on the overall developments in the situation in Mali. I take this opportunity to welcome the new Permanent Representative of Mali, Mr. Issa Konfourou.

After four months of calm, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was once again the target of a series of coordinated attacks on 3 October. Although the relative calm in recent months might have given us some hope that there could possibly be improvement in the situation on the ground, unfortunately we need to realize that the persistent delays we have seen in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the latest violations of the ceasefire are incompatible with lasting stabilization, even if that were temporary.

At the meeting of the Security Council on Mali in June (see S/PV.7727), Foreign Minister Diop announced the agreement of the parties on the modalities for the appointment of interim authorities and the timing for establishing them in the five northern regions of Mali during the June-September period, as well as the establishment of security arrangements, including the structures for the Operational Coordination Mechanism. In that context, the Council adopted resolution 2295 (2016) to call upon the parties to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, notably by agreeing, inter alia, to prioritize certain provisions.

Unfortunately, three months, later I am compelled to report to the Council that, since July, clashes have resumed among signatory groups in the Kidal region, thereby seriously threatening the peace process and postponing once again the appointment of the interim administration. Those institutional and security arrangements should have been in place for nearly a year, and the joint patrols should have been launched in November 2015. I also deplore the lack of progress regarding the process of cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The situation in the centre of the country has become worse. On 29 May, in Sévaré in the Mopti region, an improvised explosive device — if such devices really are improvised — was exploded during a convoy of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), killing five Blue Helmets returning from a civilian-protection operation in Ténenkou Cercle. On 18 July, a column of 18 vehicles and several motorcycles attacked installations of Malian armed forces in Nampala in the Ségou region, killing 15 and wounding 34 people. On 2 September, armed individuals briefly occupied the locality of Boni again in the Mopti region.

In that context, it is very important that the Government of Mali, with United Nations support, continue its efforts to prepare a national counter-terrorism strategy that is multifaceted and coherent and includes comprehensive measures to prevent violent extremism. This is necessary because repeated attacks against the authority of the State are taking place against the background of general degradation in the rule of law and social cohesion. In the region of Mopti

alone, intercommunity violence led to 18 deaths and 44 wounded in June, as well as 6 dead and 9 wounded in the period from late August to early September. In that regard, we must welcome the announcement by President Keita, during the ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the General Assembly on 23 September, that a conference of national accord would be held later this year, which could be an important step in strengthening cohesion and national reconciliation to find a long-term, as inclusive as possible, solution to the deep-rooted causes of the crisis in northern Mali.

In the past three months since the adoption of resolution 2295 (2016), MINUSMA has spared no effort to proactively adjust to its new mandate. The fact that Malian stakeholders resort to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif's good offices even on issues with indirect links to the Peace Agreement — such as when he facilitated discussions between opposition parties and the Government on the draft revised electoral law — demonstrates the level of trust that Mr. Annadif has been able to establish in the nine months he has been in office. While there is a high level of trust with the parties, unfortunately it must be said that the parties to the Peace Agreement are yet to leave aside their differences — for example, on Kidal and other issues — and to sit down with our colleague to prioritize implementation steps in order to finalize benchmarks and concrete timelines, as requested in the resolution.

With regard to additional capabilities, they have not yet been generated. The force has utilized the tools at its disposal to the fullest extent in order to project a more robust and proactive posture to protect civilians. Following the clashes in July in Kidal, the Mission launched an operation to deter clashes and protect civilians by showing a robust presence with patrols and checkpoints. It was therefore a very active posture. In August, the Mission launched another operation, again establishing checkpoints and conducting coordinated patrols with the Malian armed forces along the Timbuktu-Douentza-Hombori access from Timbuktu to the Mopti region. Furthermore, in spite of the Mission doing its utmost, civilians continue to suffer from the consequences of military operations by both the armed groups and the Government.

New violations of the ceasefire have further hampered access for humanitarian actors, who are doing their best to answer the most pressing needs of the population, pending the resumption of basic public services by the State. I also regret to note that there have been serious allegations of human rights violations, notably by the Groupe d'autodefense des Touaregs imghad et leurs alliés in the Kidal region, and we also continue to receive reports of the excessive use of force by the Malian army in the centre of the country.

Pursuant to resolution 2295 (2016), MINUSMA has developed a plan to support the redeployment of the Malian armed forces, which is fully in line with the human rights due diligence policy of the Organization. While the state of play of the peace process currently precludes the return of the Malian army to the north part of the country, the Mission has already taken concrete steps to support them in the centre of the country, for example, by upgrading protection for the armed forces at its base in Nampala and by deploying troops with air support to aid them in reasserting control over Boni.

Meanwhile, in parallel, MINUSMA continues to seek to enhance collaboration with Mali's neighbours and to support a regional security initiative to more effectively address all the common security challenges. It is in that context that Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif has been engaging the Governments of the Group of Five Sahel Member States, while the Mission is currently planning the deployment of liaison officers as stipulated in the resolution.

The participants in the ministerial meeting of 23 September unanimously stressed that the primary responsibility for the success of the peace process in Mali lies with the parties. MINUSMA will not be able to fully implement its mandate as long as the signatories to the Peace Agreement do not resolutely engage in its implementation. The time has come — it is certainly time — to rise above those immediate localized interests and to think of the long-term expectations of the constituents directly affected, as well as the needs of the country as a whole. As tragically illustrated by the attacks on Monday, the Mission's capacity to protect civilians and counter asymmetric attacks in active defence of its mandate has further been hampered by the absence of the capabilities recommended by the Secretary-General in his report issued in June, which the Council authorized in resolution 2295 (2016).

In that context, I regret to have to inform the Security Council that MINUSMA, instead of receiving reinforcements, will soon be facing the loss of key enablers. For example, two troop-contributing countries have recently apprised us of their decision to withdraw

three of the Mission's five helicopter units by early 2017.

I can assure the Council that we will make every effort to generate assets to replace them. We take every opportunity to work towards that goal, including at the London peacekeeping defence ministerial held a few weeks ago and at the ministerial meeting on Mali held here on 23 September. I attended a meeting in Europe, in Slovakia, last week, and I have also spoken to all interlocutors. But the reality is that no Member State has so far committed to filling in the gaps in our capabilities or to provide us with the capacities that have been authorized by resolution 2295 (2016) and previous resolutions.

Indeed, there is a glaring lack of volunteers. I deeply regret the sombre tone of my presentation today, but I would be remiss if I did not draw the attention of the Council to the persistent absence of concrete progress in the implementation of the peace agreement and the deterioration of the security situation, 18 months after the signing of the Algiers Accord. The situation poses serious questions as to the sustainability and the very relevance of the overall framework for peace and stability in Mali, a framework that the Malian parties have agreed to and that Mali's international partners have committed to supporting.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I give the floor to Mr. Khare.

Mr. Khare: I am honoured to be here today alongside my colleague and friend, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Ladsous.

Mali remains one of the most difficult environments known to United Nations peacekeeping. The size of the country, the remote and landlocked areas where we are deployed, and the poor and insecure road networks continue to pose significant challenges.

Currently we are focused on implementing measures to ensure secure and uninterrupted supply routes; upgrade and strengthen the defence and infrastructure of all existing camps; and improve the capabilities of the the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

MINUSMA is establishing its main logistics hub in Gao to better serve the locations in northern Mali. Discussions with Algeria, Benin and the Niger continue so as to establish additional and much shorter supply routes to Gao. The route from the port of Cotonou through Niamey to Gao, for example, would be more than 1,400 kilometres shorter than MINUSMA's current supply route.

In response to the significant security threat in Mali, MINUSMA continues to upgrade and strengthen the defence infrastructure of all existing camps, including by reinforcing its facilities against blasts and installing protected command positions and bunkers. In high-risk areas, the Mission has also improved living conditions for civilian and uniformed personnel.

We continue to innovate with the use of modern technology, particularly to improve our situational awareness and strengthen the security of our own personnel and assets as well as our capacity to protect civilians. MINUSMA has implemented several pilot projects using surveillance and early-warning technology to improve the intelligence-gathering capacity of the Mission so as to prevent attacks.

In order for MINUSMA to be able to implement its mandate, it is critical that the Mission be provided with the necessary capacities and capabilities required to operate safely and effectively in the current environment, which I have just described.

Since its inception, MINUSMA has experienced significant contingent-owned equipment capability gaps, particularly with the rehatted formed units from the African Union. Shortages of major equipment such as armoured personnel carriers, support vehicles, generators, water-treatment plants and other critical logistics equipment have affected the ability of military and police components to perform operational tasks. The self-sustainment services of the contingents, especially in the medical, observation and communication categories, among others, have not always been provided up to the established standards.

Thanks to the corrective actions taken by the concerned troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries this year to deploy the needed contingent-owned equipment vehicles and other items so as to meet their obligations and improve equipment serviceability, the overall contingent-owned equipment capability of contingents in MINUSMA has improved, but key gaps remain.

Given the increasingly insecure and violent environment outlined by Under-Secretary-General

Ladsous, efforts are being made to strengthen the Mission medical support plan, equipment and personnel gaps identified in the Mission's medical facilities. MINUSMA's vast area of operations and the austere environment present unique challenges with regard to the implementation of our 10-1-2 emergency medical response timeline for CASEVAC. To address critical gaps in TCC capabilities in this area, the Mission recently acquired, through a commercial solicitation process, two medical evacuation helicopters equipped with the latest in night-vision technology, along with fully integrated medical teams. One is already operational, deployed to Timbuktu, and the second will be deployed shortly to Kidal.

In addition, in order to effectively address the first 10 minutes from the onset of injury or illness, the training of MINUSMA troops and medical personnel is ongoing. We are also working on the development of United Nations-specific first-aid training material, which will be delivered to all Member States as a United Nations medical standard to be incorporated into predeployment troop-training material, so as to streamline the quality of first aid.

Modern peacekeeping operations such as MINUSMA demand a range of new or stronger capabilities, and they demand innovative solutions. We continue to call on Member States to consider becoming what I would refer to as "contingent-owned-equipment-contributing countries". We also call on them to consider contributing to joint battalions, and/or partnering directly with troop- and police-contributing countries to provide the required equipment.

One example of an innovative approach to ensuring the required capabilities is the recent collaboration between Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal and Sweden, which have jointly agreed to provide a C-130 aviation unit to MINUSMA through a mutually agreed multinational rotation concept. This will guarantee the continuous provision of this critical air asset to MINUSMA for a period of approximately two years. The Department of Field Support (DFS) is open to exploring similar arrangements for other equipment in Mali.

It is essential that we uphold the highest standards as we serve and protect the local population. In Mali, environmental management remains a key priority for my Department. Likewise, I continue to prioritize efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse and all issues related to the conduct of United Nations personnel. I call on all Member States to ensure that our personnel upholds the highest standards of conduct and discipline, ensuring adequate training, the timely reporting of incidents and follow-up action when necessary, so as to ensure accountability.

Looking ahead, neither the challenges nor the risks at hand should be underestimated. A failure to enhance the Mission's capability will have a significant impact on our capacity to deliver on the mandate. However, the results achieved by MINUSMA thus far suggest that with commitment, vision and the continued support of the Council, these challenges are not insurmountable.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Khare for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wisheds to make a statent.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking Under-Secretaries-General Hervé Ladsous and Atul Khare for their respective briefings this afternoon.

I would like to highlight the holding, on 23 September, of a high-level meeting on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which was a good opportunity for exchanging various points of view on the situation in the country. The situation in Mali continues to be a source of concern, in particular with regard to the levels of violence affecting the civilian population. In the past few months, terrorist attacks and successive violations of the ceasefire have been attributed to the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform and the absence of State authority in most of the country.

Some of those conditions were assessed by the Security Council mission that ook place in March as part of visits and interviews in Mali. In the light of this sensitive situation, in June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2295 (2016), which grants the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) increased military and police contingents and a considerably more robust mandate than its previous one. It includes active defence and prevention capabilities and the ability to combat asymmetric threats, among other provisions.

Although Uruguay believes that the current MINUSMA mandate goes beyond what is usually expected in a peacekeeping operation by including

counter-terrorism activities, my delegation voted in favour of it, with the understanding that Mali's security situation is an extraordinary one. Three months after adopting resolution 2295 (2016), the situation in Mali remains critical and the security situation on the ground shows no signs of improving — on the contrary.

We believe that the activities conducted thanks to financing from the Peacebuilding fund are relevant and have made it possible to achieve results on the socioeconomic front conducive to capacity-building. As indicated by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/819), such activities made it possible for 3,856 Malian children to attend school, 650 income-generating activities for internally displaced persons, refugees and persons returning home to be created and 460 women affected by gender violence to have improved access to justice and security. Thanks to those types of activities, Mali will have an opportunity to build capacity that transcends the presence of the United Nations on the ground.

Uruguay is aware of the challenges being faced by the Government of Mali, particularly in the areas of security and the economy, but it should tackle that problem with a long-term approach, by addressing the root causes of the problem, giving signs of credibility to the parties to the Peace Agreement and avoiding the spread of terrorism in the country. The regional initiatives to combat terrorism, as the Group of Five for the Sahel, are crucial in addressing the problem of terrorism affecting Mali and various countries in the region. We must recall that such terrorist groups disregard borders and, as such, approaching the issue from a solely national perspective would be simplistic. Therefore, we urge the Government of Mali and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform to keep dialogue open in order to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, in the conviction that if these are not achieved, new flanks facilitating terrorist activities will emerge and it will be increasingly difficult to re-establish the State's authority throughout the country.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I take the floor at the Security Council since assuming my duties as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mali, I am delighted to convey cordial greetings and profound gratitude from the Government and the people of Mali for the special attention paid to Mali by the Council. I am committed to working closely with the members of the Council to achieve peace and stability in Mali and beyond.

I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Mali, on the accession of your great country, the Russian Federation, to the presidency of the Security Council for October. I sincerely thank the delegation of New Zealand for the commendable work done during its presidency of the Council over the past month. I must also pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his deep and unwavering commitment to peace, security and to the well-being of people throughout the world and, in particular, in my county, Mali. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Minister Mahamat Saleh Annadif, the United Nations system and all of our other partners for their ceaseless efforts to promote peace and stability in Mali. On behalf of the President of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, I would like to commend the members of the Council today on reaching consensus in selecting Prime Minister António Guterres as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I would like to reiterate the appreciation of the Government and people of Mali to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Chair of the Follow-Up Committee on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, France, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Chad, the United States of America, Russia, the United Kingdom and China for their commitment to restoring peace and stability in our country.

The delegation of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/819) and commends Under-Secretaries-General Hervé Ladsous and Atul Khare for their briefings. The report is focused on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and reconciliation in Mali and on action taken by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We commend the fact that the current report refers to the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement and acknowledges the efforts made by the Government of Mali, led by President Keita as the Head of State.

With regard to security, the delegation of Mali is concerned about the inter- and intra-community tension in regions in the north of the country, including Kidal. We share the analysis of the Secretary-General that the situation in the centre and north of the country remains of concern given the persistence of asymmetric attacks perpetrated by extremist and terrorist groups against Mali's defence and security forces and international forces. Such factors are the main obstacles to the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

Like the Secretary-General, the Government of Mali is concerned about the human rights situation in the country. However, the excessive use of force, of which the security and defence forces of Mali have been accused in their fight against terrorism, appears to be exaggerated. It does not take into account the efforts undertaken by the Government of Mali in order to promote and protect human rights in a very difficult environment, marked by the lack of State authority in certain parts of the country. Be that as it may, I can assure the Council that investigations are under way and proceedings have been opened by the Ministry of Justice in Mali. I would also like to assure the Council that the Government of Mali remains fully committed to promoting and protecting human rights.

You will recall, Sir, that on 16 June, following a similar exercise, the Prime Minister of Mali informed the Security Council about actions and initiatives undertaken by the Government of Mali within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconcilation in Mali. Convinced that speeding up its implementation is the only viable political and strategic option in the current situation faced by my country, the Government has spared no effort to continue along that path.

More recently, during the high-level ministerial meeting devoted to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which was co-chaired with the Secretary-General on 23 September here in New York, the Head of State of Mali recalled the major progress that had been achieved. Also, to express his personal involvement and his desire to expedite the process, the President of the Republic informed us of his appointment of a High Representative responsible for follow-up to the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. He also stressed that a total cessation of hostilities between the defence and security forces of Mali and armed groups had taken place since the signing of the Agreement in May/June 2015. Trust is therefore being restored among Malian parties.

With regard to political and institutional reforms, the Government of Mali has carried out a review of the code on local collectivities, the adoption of a new electoral law and the appointment of governors of new regions, as well as the setting up of a working group to review the Constitution with a view to looking at a number of relevant provisions of the Peace Agreement.

On the development front, the Government of Mali has adopted an emergency reconstruction plan for the interim period, which covers 2016-2017, and is continuing to develop specific development strategy for the northern regions of Mali and one for a financial architecture of a sustainable development fund for the north. The fund will include almost €457 million for the period 2016-2018, which is considered to be our Government's contribution to the peace effort. We will also establish of a number of regional development agencies.

In addition to these measures, the President has announced the convening of the national reconciliation conference before the end of the current year. This will be in keeping with the relevant provisions of the Agreement and its article 5, which calls for the establishment of the necessary conditions for an in-depth debate among all the components of our nation regarding the deep-rooted causes of the conflict. The objective is to come up with a charter for peace, unity and national reconciliation. Similarly, the Government has decided that we will hold communal local elections before the end of 2016.

In keeping with this momentum, the Head of State has held a number of meetings and discussions with the key political and social players in our country. The President has received the leader of the opposition and several other political, religious and traditional leaders to hear their concerns. The overall situation of the country, particularly in the centre and the north, lay at the very heart of these exchanges.

With regard to the situation in Kidal, one marked by inter- and intra-community clashes, which are of concern to the national authorities at the very highest level, I would like to underscore that the Government of the Republic Mali is in no way linked to these tensions and local rivalries. The Government has no interest in backing one camp against any other. Given the loss of life and the consequences of these tensions on the whole

peace process, the High Representative of the President to follow-up on the implementation of Peace Agreement has organized a series of meetings in Bamako between the signatory movements, with the participation of international members of the Follow-up Committee. The President will continue to work with the leaders of the different movements and traditional leaders in the region to contribute to the return of peace, which is necessary for trust among the different parties.

Similarly, the Government has given pride of place to the same approach comprising dialogue and the search for peaceful solutions in the face of the deteriorating security situation in the centre of the country. The Head of State has called upon traditional mechanisms for resolving inter-communal tensions by contacting political, religious and traditional leaders to reduce tensions in the Mopti region. He has also called to avoid any confusion in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The Government had worked to finalize a comprehensive action plan to secure, stabilize and strengthen social cohesion aimed at coming up with a multifaceted response to the situation in the central parts of my country.

As can be noted, the Government of Mali, under the authority of the President Keita, has as its only priority the welfare of the Malian people, a well-being which requires peace and reconciliation, which lies at the very heart of our country. That is why he has committed himself in a resolved way and in good faith to a full-fledged implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. However, we will not be able to achieve this alone. The other Malian parties must fully play their role in that exercise. They will have to break with all terrorist movements and organized crime, and commit themselves in good faith to peace.

I would like to underscore the necessity of accelerating the process of cantonment and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration in order to isolate those armed groups that have not signed the Peace Agreement that are affiliated with terrorist networks, whose presence in the northern regions is undermining efforts under way there.

Also, to put an end to the untold suffering inflicted upon innocent people, the Government again calls for the adoption of targeted sanctions against all those who impede the implementation of the Peace Agreement, in keeping with the relevant provisions of article 54 and the declaration of the international mediation team during the eleventh meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. The international community also has a great responsibility as guarantor of the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We would like to renew our call upon friendly States and partner organizations to make more concrete the commitments undertaken during successive conferences on the development of Mali to enable us to ensure the effective implementation of the Agreement.

It is also the responsibility of the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 2295 (2016) — and we welcome its adoption — to help the Government of Mali to progressively restore the authority of the State throughout the national territory, a precondition for ending the abuse and lawlessness in a number of areas of Mali. To do this, MINUSMA, as now authorized by resolution 2295 (2016), must adopt a more proactive and robust posture. It is therefore important, even urgent, that MINUSMA be fully equipped and provided with the necessary means and resources to appropriately discharge its mandate, which is to stabilize Mali. On its part, the Government of Mali will fully play its role within the framework of the new mandate, and is already working closely with MINUSMA to very rapidly achieve a common vision regarding its implementation through the development of quantifiable benchmarks.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the gratitude of the Government and the people of Mali to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative in Mali and to all the troop-contributing countries for all the sacrifices that they have made for a final and lasting settlement to the Malian crisis. I pay tribute to all victims of this crisis, civilians and military, foreign and Malian. I also welcome the outstanding work carried out by the women and men of MINUSMA, as well as the Barkhane Force for the stabilization of Mali and the entire Sahel region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.